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EDITORIAL NOTE



As the title of this booklet implies, its pages seek to tell *in outline* the history of the English Church. Unavoidable limits of space, it should be borne in mind, necessarily confine even this "Outline" to outstanding events and names in the crowded annals of the Church during the thirteen centuries or more in which her life and work have been closely interwoven with the life and progress of the Nation. Much has necessarily been left unsaid which may well be thought to call for record. All that is claimed for this "Outline" is indeed that it is an attempt to present some of the essential facts about the history of our Church with clearness, terseness, and accuracy; and in a form which will place them within the reach of the widest possible circle of readers and inquirers.

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An Outline History of the Church of England



I

IN EARLY DAYS

The Early British Church—S. Augustine—The Church in Northumbria—Theodore—Wilfrid—S. Guthbert—The Danes and Alfred—S. Dunstan.

WHENCE came the Church first to England? And when? Alas, we have little positive information on which to base an answer to these natural questions. There is nevertheless good ground for the belief that by the beginning of the third century the Church had come over the seas to Britain with the Romans. Possibly it came in the wake of the rich civilians of Gaul who had their villas at Silchester and Verulam (S. Albans), where remains of churches built during the Roman occupation have been brought to light. And clearly linked with these days is the story that has come down to us of its first martyr, S. Alban.¹

This ancient British Church was no doubt a poor, struggling isolated Church. It was an offshoot from,

¹ A Briton who was serving with the Roman legions, S. Alban, assisted the escape of a Christian priest who was seeking shelter from pursuit. When charged with the offence he confessed to it, boldly avowing himself a Christian, and was beheaded on the green hill near which S. Albans Abbey now stands.

and in a large measure dependent upon, its richer neighbour in Gaul. Yet there is clear proof that 300-359 it was officially recognized as a duly and regularly organized branch of the Church Catholic, for it was represented by its bishops at the great Councils of the Church held at Arles (314) and at Ariminum (359), and its representatives were summoned similarly to the Councils of Nicæa (325) and Sardica (347).

A century later, when the Romans had left and the Saxon tribes began their invasion of Britain, the Church became still more isolated. It was driven back to the West and the North—to the hills and islands of Cornwall, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. Nevertheless, this dark and troublous period produced sainted missionaries whose names will ever shine brightly in the annals of the Church.

S. Patrick, born in Britain, was, as a boy, captured as a slave and carried to Ireland for some years. He escaped and regained his old home. But he 400-500 could not rest. He was ever haunted by an irresistible longing to make Christ known in Ireland. Thither accordingly he returned, and by his untiring labours for many years laid well and nobly the foundations of the Church in that country (450-490).

From the seed thus sown another memorable mission sprang. Less than a century later **S. Columba** went from Ireland (563) with twelve companions to carry the message of the Gospel to the Irish Scots in Argyllshire. **S. Ninian** had preceded **S. Columba** in this work, and as far back as 397 had founded a missionary bishopric at Whithorn, in Galloway. But in the interval heathenism had regained its sway, and **S. Columba's** work was to replant Christianity in the northern land. He settled in the island of **Iona**, and the outcome we shall in due time see.

Almost simultaneously momentous events were happening on our southern shores. **S. Augustine** landed in Thanet at the head of a mission sent 597 forth from Rome by Gregory the Great. He was favourably received by Ethelbert, King of Kent, whose wife Bertha was the Christian daughter of the King of the Franks. Lodgings were granted to him in Canterbury, and before long he won over the king and many of his followers to the Christian Faith.

In seven short years **S. Augustine** (who died in 604) wrought a work for the Church which lasts to this day. He firmly established Christianity in the Kingdom of Kent. But it is essential to remember that noble as were his aims and far-reaching his plans, he achieved but little outside the borders of Kent. His conference with the Welsh and Celtic bishops was abortive. The British Church refused to acknowledge his authority or to abandon its ancient customs in the keeping of Easter and the administration of Baptism. Again, **Mellitus**, who was created Bishop of London in 604, was banished twelve years later, and this mission post, the only step forward **Augustine** had been able to make outside Kent, was overthrown.

Undeterred by this defeat, **Paulinus**, one of **S. Augustine's** followers, left the South for the North in 625. He accompanied **Ethelburga** on her 625-635 marriage to **Edwin**, King of Northumbria, and began the evangelization of that kingdom. Travelling on foot from the Firth of Forth to the Humber, he carried on a long series of missionary tours, and, as tradition tells us, won numerous converts to the Faith. But before long heathenism again asserted itself. The Mercians under **Penda**, in alliance with **Cadwallon**, King of North Wales, invaded Northumbria, and defeated and slew **Edwin**. **Paulinus** and the widowed queen returned to Kent, where the former

ended his days as the Bishop of Rochester. James, a deacon who had accompanied Paulinus, remained behind in Northumbria to carry on the work as best he could.

Whilst the Church, so far as it was the offspring of the mission from Rome, shrank into inactivity in Kent before the forces of heathenism, other missionary efforts were in progress. **Felix**, a monk of Burgundy, arrived in East Anglia (631), set up his bishop's stool at Dunwich and a monastery at Burgh Castle, whence hands of Christian preachers poured forth. Again, in 634 **Birinus** arrived in Hampshire from Italy, and eventually established his cathedral in the old Roman settlement of Dorchester.

The chief force in the conversion of England at this stage, was, however, to come from the North, and must be traced back to the Irish missionaries who 635-655 had settled at Iona. When Oswald, nephew of Edwin, King of Northumbria, defeated Cadwallon at Hexham and was formally established on his uncle's throne, one of his first thoughts was to call for missionaries from S. Columba's monastery at Iona, where he himself had been educated. Aidan was dispatched in response to this call to become Bishop of Northumbria.¹ He chose the island of Lindisfarne as his home, travelling thence throughout his diocese, and to him and the memory of his saintliness and unceasing devotion to all good works this rugged spot in the northern seas owes its name and fame as "Holy Island."

Heathenism, however, made one final effort under Penda to obtain the mastery. The attempt failed, and Penda's death (655) marked the end of the long conflict. The Mercians, as Bede tells us, with their king,

¹ "Never were two men better fitted than Oswald and Aidan to work together for the highest interests of mankind."

rejoiced to serve Christ, Who, indeed, was never thenceforward to be formally disowned by the secular power in Britain.

But the Christianity so professed differed at this period in different parts of the country in origin, in observance, in tradition, and in spirit. In Kent and Wessex it was Roman and papal. In Northumbria, Mercia, and among the East Saxons it was Irish in character, and held fast to the Celtic customs. In East Anglia there was a mixture of origin and probably of practice. Outside the limits of the East Anglian kingdoms Celtic Christianity bore unquestioned sway. In fact, over five-sixths of Christian Britain the authority of Rome was not acknowledged.

One effort to bring about greater unity was made at the conference at **Whitby**, at which **Colman**, Aidan's successor at Holy Island, pleaded for the Irish time 664 of keeping Easter and the Irish fashion of the tonsure, and **Wilfrid** of Ripon pleaded for the Roman usages. The Roman custom was adopted, and Colman and many of his followers forsook Lindisfarne for Iona. But the decision saved the English Church from chaos. The first necessary step towards its proper organization was thus taken.

During the next twenty years the work of unification and organization was carried still further under the wise leadership of **Theodore** as Archbishop of 668-690 Canterbury. On the death of Deusdedit, the previous archbishop, the Kings of Kent and Northumbria had agreed in choosing a Kentish priest named **Wighard** as his successor, and sending him to Rome for consecration. But **Wighard** died of the plague, and the filling of the vacancy thus accidentally fell to Pope **Vitalian**. His choice ultimately rested upon **Theodore**, a native of Tarsus, who

had acquired considerable reputation for his learning, and whose work abundantly justified his selection for the office.

Theodore found Chad installed as Bishop of York, owing to the long absence in Gaul of Wilfrid, who had previously been lawfully appointed to the see. Though Chad was ruling his vast diocese with singular zeal and winning love, Theodore held that his consecration was irregular, and Chad obediently retired and Wilfrid was reinstated. Chad was afterwards appointed Bishop of the Mercians, and devoted the rest of his noble life to founding the See of Lichfield.

Theodore's next step was to summon his bishops to meet him in synod at Hertford—the first Provincial Council of the Church of England, and the forerunner of our present Convocations—at which various "canons" or resolutions were agreed to for the better organization and discipline of the Church.

Convinced that the English bishoprics—which generally had been co-terminous with the kingdoms—were far too large, Theodore steadily pressed forward with the work of sub-dividing them. In the case of Northumbria, where Wilfrid ruled from the Humber to the Forth, he proceeded, with the King's consent, to divide it into four parts. Wilfrid, who had not been consulted, appealed forthwith to the Pope, went to Rome to urge his cause, and returned with the Pope's Bull in his favour. But the Northumbrian king and Witan refused to accept dictation from a foreign power. They accused Wilfrid of bribing the Roman Court, and first imprisoned and then banished him. Wilfrid retired ultimately to Sussex, where his missionary labours were crowned with great success.

Theodore died in 690. In his great work of organizing the Church he achieved also a great national work. He promoted and strengthened the idea of national unity. His councils were the first of all national

gatherings for general legislation. The ecclesiastical synods led the way to our national parliament, just as the "canons" led the way to a national system of law.¹

A year or two before his death a reconciliation had been effected between Wilfrid and Theodore, by which the former returned to his old diocese. But immediately after the archbishop's death fresh trouble ensued when Wilfrid was called upon by the King of Northumbria to make Ripon into a separate diocese. Wilfrid refused, and was again banished.

Meanwhile a great work was being carried on in the North by the most honoured and loved among the Northumbrian saints—**S. Cuthbert**. After years of mission labour in the Lowlands, Cuthbert had repaired to Northumbria and there preached the Gospel with passionate fervour and sincerity. He remained at Holy Island after the great secession which followed the Synod of Whitby, and gradually restored discipline "by the gentle appeal of a burning love, by unlimited patience and unflinching temper." Then he retired to live a hermit's life on the little island of Farne. From this seclusion he was called, in 685, to the vacant bishopric. As he ignored the call, king and clergy and thegns crossed to Lindisfarne and on their knees begged him to accept the episcopate (685). Cuthbert yielded, but held the office only two years, returning to his island hermitage to die.²

Early in the eighth century another attempt was made at a conference at Easterfield to settle the still outstanding dispute with Wilfrid. But the Northumbrian clergy could not forgive the bishop who

¹ J. R. Green.

² Willibrord, of Northumbria, in 690, with twelve companions, set forth on a missionary enterprise to the Continent to begin the evangelization of Frisia. They were joined later on by Winfrid, better known as **S. Boniface**, who was martyred in 755.

had sought the help of the Pope to overrule the decisions of their national Witan and their 700-780 King. Wilfrid refused to yield to their demand for submission, and once again appealed in person to Rome. Again the Pope's judgement was in his favour, but on this occasion it took the form of a recommendation to the national Synod. This advice was eventually acted upon, and Wilfrid was restored to the Bishopric of Hexham and Ripon.

With the restoration and death of Wilfrid the story of the organization of the infant Church of England is completed. To Wilfrid belongs the credit of uniting the Church as a whole to the Western Church, and of winning the last strongholds of English heathenism to Christ. To Theodore, as we have seen, we owe the organization of the government of the Church, and the due recognition of the spirit of national independence.

One other name stands out conspicuously in the annals of the Church in these early days. First among English scholars, theologians, and historians—**Bede**—the Venerable Bede as later times named him—gave his whole life in entire simplicity to study, teaching and writing in his monastery at Jarrow. His works—a kind of encyclopædia of all that was then known—mark the beginnings of English literature.

Despite all that had been accomplished by Wilfrid and Theodore, darker days were dawning for the

Church even before the Danes first appeared 780-880 on our shores. The monasteries lacked control and supervision, and deteriorated; learning and morality alike declined among the clergy; and a tendency was manifest to model the organization of the Church on the lines of the different English kingdoms. Thus an archbishopric was established at Lichfield in 787 only to be abolished in 803.

A few years later the Northern barbarians swept down upon our shores. Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians, by repeated invasions, established themselves in possession of the land. Villages were burnt, churches and monasteries destroyed. **S. Edmund**, under-King of East Anglia, was shot to death by arrows near the spot where the Abbey of Bury S. Edmund was raised to his honour. At length the tide of Danish victories was stemmed by **Alfred**. By the peace of Wedmore the Danes recognized his successes in the field, their chief accepted the Christian Faith, and Alfred was free to begin the building up of the Church after the devastation it had sustained.

This revival, however, was necessarily limited in its scope and extent. It barely touched the Church in the North, and even in the South it hardly 880-966 effected more than an improvement in the life and learning of the clergy. It was left to **Dunstan**, seventy years later, to carry the work further. Created Archbishop of Canterbury (950), and Edgar's chief adviser for sixteen years, he sought both to impose and inspire a higher ideal of Church life. Dunstan, in fact, stands first in the long line of statesmen-ecclesiastics who in after years played so large a part in English history.

II

AFTER THE NORMAN CONQUEST

William I's policy—Anselm—Henry II and Becket—Stephen Langton—John and the Great Charter—Rome and the Struggle for English freedom—The Coming of the Friars.

THE Church shared to the full in the great change wrought in the national life by the coming of the Normans. Once firmly settled on his throne, and the

actual work of conquest complete, William summoned to his aid as Archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc, formerly Abbot of Bec, and unquestionably the greatest living ecclesiastic north of the Alps. The King and archbishop were united in giving effect to a policy which at once placed the Church in closer relationship with Western Christendom and the Pope.

Most of the bishoprics and abbeys were filled by Normans. Discipline was restored; clerical celibacy was enjoined; the monastic system tended and strengthened; learning gradually revived. The sees of the bishops were removed from small villages to large towns: just as the barons began to build strong castles, so churches and cathedrals were built on a scale and with a massiveness hitherto unknown.

William's policy, however, included more than this. He was resolute to establish his supremacy in matters ecclesiastical. True, he separated ecclesiastical from civil cases, so that the former were tried only in ecclesiastical courts, and by canon law. But bishops, like the barons, had to pay him homage. No synod could legislate without his consent. And William was the one ruler of his time who firmly repudiated the claim to world-wide jurisdiction now being put forward by the Pope. He flatly refused to render homage to Gregory VII, on the double ground that he himself had never promised to do so, and that such homage had never been rendered by his predecessors.

Under William's immediate successors the Church fared far less happily. Rufus sold bishoprics to the highest bidder, or kept them vacant that he might seize the revenues. For four years after Lanfranc's death no successor was appointed. Then the King, whilst severely ill, and

panic-stricken at the thought of death, summoned the saintly Anselm from Bec to fill the vacancy—only, however, to quarrel with him on several questions, and notably as to the right to invest him with the pall or badge of his office. Anselm was driven into exile, and did not return until the accession of Henry I. The investiture dispute was renewed, and a final settlement was not reached until 1107, when Henry abandoned his claim to invest with the ring and the staff, the symbols of spiritual authority, whilst receiving the oath of homage as a token of feudal allegiance. Thus in this first great struggle between the Church and State in England since the days of Wilfrid, the victory rested with the Church, as the champion, not so much of the claims of the Pope, as of the rights of conscience against the despotism of the Crown.¹

Before the end of the century, however, Church and State were again in conflict, in the persons of Henry II and Becket.

A protégé of Theobald, Becket's ability won him the King's favour and friendship, and promotion to the office of chancellor and chief minister, controlling both home and foreign policy. On Theobald's death Henry pressed the vacant archbishopric on his chancellor's acceptance. Becket, conscious of the aims and spirit of the King's policy towards the Church, at first demurred, but finally yielded to Henry's desire. Events, however, quickly justified his forebodings. It was soon manifest that the King was bent on vindicating the royal supremacy, on checking interference from abroad, and on curbing the power of the Church in temporal matters.

¹ So, too, let us briefly note that forty or fifty years later, as Stephen's feeble reign came to an end, and feudalism collapsed and anarchy ruled, so far as there was any order at all in the country it came from the Church, under the wise leadership of Theobald as Archbishop of Canterbury.

The dispute became acute when Becket was called upon to accept the Constitutions drawn up at Clarendon purporting to embody the ancient customs of the realm touching the relations of Church and State. Becket at first assented to them, but withdrew his consent at the Council of Northampton, though conscious that he did so at the risk of his life. He escaped to the Continent, and spent six years in exile.

Ultimately Henry was convinced that Becket must be brought back, and a hollow reconciliation was patched up. Becket landed in Kent, and was welcomed by the people as their deliverer. Three weeks afterwards, however, angry measures by Becket provoked hasty words from Henry, and these in their turn led to the murder of the archbishop in Canterbury Cathedral, on December 29th, by four of the King's knights.

This brutal crime aroused universal horror. Henry had to yield before the storm, annul in form the obnoxious "Constitutions," and submit himself to humiliating penance at Canterbury. For Becket, despite all faults and errors, stood out before the world as the one champion of religious liberty against the personal will of the sovereign—a willing martyr for what he believed to be the rights of the Church. Men knelt at his shrine, venerated his relics, and eagerly believed stories of miracles alleged to be wrought at his tomb.

As we pass from the twelfth to the thirteenth century we are quickly brought face to face with one of the great crises in the history of the English nation. The winning of the Great Charter from John's reluctant hands not only laid the foundations of English liberty, but no less unde-

nially sowed the seeds of the severance of the English Church from the Roman obedience three centuries later.

John, immediately after his accession, showed himself the lustful, unscrupulous tyrant which history has unanimously and unhesitatingly pronounced him. One strenuous opponent of his measures was Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, and on the latter's death in 1205, John determined to replace him by a nominee of his own. But the monks of Canterbury were equally resolved to have the voice in the election to which they were entitled, and a settlement of the dispute was sought in an appeal to Rome. This step, as events proved, involved great and far-reaching consequences.

Pope Innocent III, one of the strongest pontiffs Rome had then seen, ignored the wishes of both King and monks, and ordered the election of his own nominee, Stephen Langton, an Englishman of great ability, holiness, and learning. John, furiously enraged at Langton's election, declared that he should never be allowed to land in England. But in the thirteenth century the Pope could not be recklessly defied, and Innocent III replied by exercising the right, which had before then been asserted by his predecessors, to remove an unworthy ruler from the throne. He placed England under an interdict, excommunicated John, and proclaimed a crusade against him. John, with all his daring and ability, found himself more than outmatched. He abjectly surrendered, laid his crown at the feet of the Pope's legate, swore fealty and homage to the Pope, which William had refused to do,¹ and received back the kingdom as Rome's vassal.

The news filled his subjects with shame and indignation. Defeated by the French at Bouvines, John returned to England to find the barons determined, under

¹ See p. 14.

the leadership of Langton, to secure the restoration of their liberties. The outcome was the signature of the **Great Charter** at Runnymede, setting forth with care and precision the fundamental principles of English liberty and good government.¹

To Langton more than any other one man the overthrow of John's despotism was due. He had withstood the King and rescued the country from tyranny, just as Anselm had withstood William Rufus, and Theobald had rescued England from the lawlessness of Stephen. But the Pope on his part felt constrained to stand by the King as his vassal. So far as he could, he annulled the Charter and punished the archbishop for his part in connection with it by suspending him from his ecclesiastical functions. The death of both the King and the Pope in 1216 brought about a lull in the storm, and during Henry III's minority both the new Pope and Langton co-operated with the nobles in promoting the safety of the throne and the liberties of the people.

But the lull was short. As soon as he had come of age, Henry constantly strove to annul the Charter and assert his own uncontrolled power. To 1216-1272 secure protection against the barons he threw himself into the hands of the Pope, and "England was sucked dry, like an orange, by King and Pope combined." Thus the right to appoint to English benefices in public patronage was claimed by the Pope, by whom extortionate taxes were imposed upon both clergy and laity, and while the country was flooded by foreign ecclesiastics, the revenues of many valuable livings passed to non-resident Italians.

In this "the golden age of English Churchmanship," the clergy, almost to a man, supported the

¹ Based on the charter granted by Henry I, the Great Charter in its first clause recognized and secured the rights of the Church—"The Church of England shall be free."

barons in their great struggle against the King's tyranny. **Grosseteste**, the intrepid and learned Bishop of Lincoln, with many others, co-operated with Simon de Montfort in the revolt which culminated in the King's defeat at Lewes, and in the summoning of a Parliament by de Montfort, at which for the first time representatives from the boroughs sat side by side with knights from the counties.

The struggle for political freedom was, however, but one feature and factor in English life at this period. High ideals and strenuous effort marked many other spheres of thought and action in the thirteenth century. Its scholars and teachers essayed to take the whole of knowledge as their province. Its artists were the pioneers of a new age. Its architects and builders showed the same aspiration to reach higher and higher by the pointing of the arch, the vaulting of the pitch of the roof, the graceful and lofty towers which we see to-day, for example, at York and Westminster, Lincoln and Salisbury. The ruins of Tintern and Fountains Abbey and Rievaulx still remind us of the labours and the wealth of the Order of the Cistercians, founded by Stephen Harding a century or more before.

To the people generally, however, the "coming of the Friars" (1220-30) was a revolution. The Black Friars of S. Dominio and the Grey Friars of S. Francis came in protest against the appropriation by the monastic orders of the endowments of the parochial clergy, and aflame with zeal to preach the Gospel to the poorest and lowliest. Barefoot, and clad in a coarse frock of serge, they lived literally on the alms of those to whom they offered their ministrations, and by whom they were welcomed with delight. "For more than a hundred years they were, on the whole, a power for good up and down the land, the friends of the poor, and the evangelizers of the masses."

III

IN THE MIDDLE AGES

England and the Papal claims—John Wycliffe and the Lollards—The Revival of Learning—Church life and organization.

THE English repudiation of the political claims of Rome, which was steadily pressed forward, step by step throughout the fourteenth century, 1305-1375 was inevitably hastened by the simultaneous collapse of the Papacy itself as a political power. For seventy years (1305-1375) the Popes lived in exile at Avignon, and were compelled meekly to follow the policy prescribed by the Kings of France, under whose supervision they were elected. Then for nearly forty years Christendom saw the demoralizing spectacle of rival Popes urging their discordant claims.

Conscious of growing national greatness, England was less willing than ever, under such circumstances as these, to submit to Papal extortions and Papal administrative interference. Successive Parliaments consistently and emphatically gave effect to this feeling. The claim of the Pope to adjudicate on the question of overlordship between England and Scotland was flatly denied. The Statute of Provisors (1351) aimed at checking the Pope's practice of appointing his protégés to benefices regardless of the rights of the lawful patrons. The Statute of Praemunire imposed heavy penalties for suing the King's subjects in foreign courts, and for bringing into the country Papal Bulls and excommunications affecting the King or any of his subjects (1353). The annual tribute to the Pope which John had promised to pay, but which had been in arrears for some years, was formally repudiated (1366).

But there was another aspect of Church life in England with which neither Parliament nor people were content. The Church had rapidly amassed much wealth and power. The clergy held the chief offices of the State, and monasteries and other clerical corporations owned a very large part of the land. So we find Parliament as early as 1279 passing the first Act of Mortmain, to prevent the gift of land to religious corporations without the consent of the King. Land thus in the hands of the Church, it was urged, was in a dead hand (Mortmain), since it was not liable to feudal dues. Later on the Commons petitioned against the undue privileges of the clergy. In 1371 William of Wykeham was compelled to resign the Chancellorship.

As the years passed, a valuable recruit in this attack was forthcoming from an unexpected quarter in John Wycliffe, one of the most noted 1370-84 teachers of his time at Oxford. Strongly opposed alike to the Papal claims to temporal power and to the accumulation of wealth by the Church, he was warmly welcomed as an ally by John of Gaunt and the barons in their anti-clerical policy. When summoned for trial by the Pope's orders, at the Archbishop's Court at Lambeth, he was saved by their influence from formal censure and condemnation. Returning to his country parsonage at Lutterworth, he founded a brotherhood of poor preachers on the lines originally followed by the Friars.

Like the Friars before them, the Wycliffe preachers were cordially welcomed by the people, and they and their master were accused of sowing the seeds of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. Probably Wycliffe's crusade against wealth, and his denial of authority, distorted and exaggerated as his views were by many of his

followers, was one of the subsidiary causes of the uprising. But the main causes were the discord in the nation and the misery among the peasantry which had followed from the war with France, the ravages of the Black Death, and the oppression of the baronage.

So far, Wycliffe's quarrel with the Church had been with its practices rather than with its doctrine. The reforms he called for were reforms in system and administration, not changes in faith. But in the last years of his life he devoted his attention to theological questions. He formally denied the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and replied to the condemnation of his views by issuing with amazing industry tract after tract setting forth his teaching in rough, clear, homely English. Believing firmly in the Scriptures as a guide to truth, he completed a translation of the Bible, which was to prove the basis of all future translations, and which, coupled with the tracts, established Wycliffe's claim to be considered the father of our later English prose.

The Lollard movement, of which Wycliffe's teaching was in a sense the source, and which took more or less definite shape during the reformer's 1384-1450 last years, struggled on for twenty or thirty years after his death. It was, however, much more a political than a religious movement. It was one form of the national protest against the misery and the misgovernment of the time. The barons and the Church joined hands in seeking to suppress it. One priest (William Sawtre) was condemned and burnt for heresy, while the failure of the rising in 1414 and the severe penalties imposed upon some of its leaders marked the decline of its political activity. Moreover, the war with France and the Wars of the Roses forced other issues to the front. Lollardism was driven into the background, although the social

issues on which it had touched were as real and urgent as ever.

In some of its broad features the organization of the English Church in the Middle Ages was almost identical with that which we know to-day. Thus, England and Wales were split up for ecclesiastical purposes into twenty-three areas known as dioceses, over each of which a bishop ruled with the help of one or more archdeacons, each having under the bishop oversight of a definite district. In time the archdeaconries were subdivided into rural deaneries, the latter consisting of groups of adjacent parishes, the clergy of which elected one of their number as their president or rural dean, who was their official mouthpiece in communication with the archdeacon or the bishop. There were, it is computed, some eight thousand parishes and probably some twelve thousand parochial clergy.

The parish priest of the Middle Ages "looked upon himself as essentially the priest of his people and the dispenser of the Sacraments. He said the seven canonical hours daily in church, and the lesser offices of the Blessed Virgin Mary; on Sundays and Holy Days after he had finished Terce he said Mass. Thrice in the year he heard the regular confessions of his parishioners and gave them their communion. He took the communion to the sick when required. Four times in the year he instructed his people in the Articles of Faith."

Public worship in the churches was conducted in Latin—the language then used for all official documents—and with a splendour, even in small village churches, not easy for us to realize. The vestments of the clergy were made of the richest materials; the musical services were ornate; in the windows "the pictured glass told to the unlearned the story of the Redemptive love."

Not less important than the parish church and the

¹ Wakeman.

parochial clergy were the "religious houses" and the "religious orders," as the monasteries and the monks and nuns who inhabited them were called. The original idea of mediæval monasticism was high and laudable. It implied that the monk separated himself from his fellows and denounced the pomps and vanities of life in order to lead a disciplined life of devotion to God. As time passed and the orders grew in number and established themselves in different parts of the country, there was scarcely a district where their influence was not known and felt, where their ministrations to the sick and needy were not gratefully received.

But with this growth came also obvious evils. The monks claimed special privileges and rights; their abbots "set themselves up as rivals to the bishops," attached themselves directly to the Pope, and claimed exemption from episcopal control. With increased wealth—for so great were the benefactions they received that at one time the monasteries owned nearly one-third of the land of England—their religious ideal perceptibly declined. Whilst we must dismiss as unfounded the charges of gross and widespread corruption which have been brought against the orders, it seems undeniable that a laxer mode of life gradually prevailed where austere devotion and real asceticism originally ruled.

As the century drew to a close it became manifest that an influence was at work in the world which was affecting men's thought and action in every department of life. The discoveries of Copernicus, the invention of printing, the voyages of Vasco da Gama, Columbus, and Sebastian Cabot were among the fruits of the intellectual awakening known to us as the Revival of Learning. And in England not less than on the Continent, this movement was destined to influence profoundly the course of political and ecclesiastical affairs.

IV

THE REFORMATION

A.—*The Political Breach with Rome, 1507-1547.*

THE first stage in the long and momentous series of events which we know as the English Reformation was beyond doubt indirectly influenced by the revival of learning and the desire for reform within the Church alluded to in the previous chapter. But it was nevertheless strictly confined to issues in no sense theological, but essentially political and personal.¹

For some little time after Henry VIII's accession his relations with the Pope were thoroughly cordial. As to the orthodoxy of his beliefs there was 1509-1526 indeed no question. He had penned a reply to one of Luther's treatises, and in acknowledgement of it had received from the Pope the title of *Fidei Defensor* (Defender of the Faith), still borne by English monarchs. Yet in a few short years the breach between the Pope and the King was so complete that the Papal jurisdiction in this country had been practically swept away.

The quarrel which involved this political revolution arose in connection with the King's relations with his first wife, Catherine of Arragon. Catherine had been first married to Arthur, Henry's elder brother, who, however, died five months after. For her subsequent marriage with Henry a dispensation was duly obtained from Pope Julius II. When the King, wearying of Catherine, became violently enamoured of Anne Boleyn, he appealed to the then Pope (Clement VII) to annul his marriage. Audacious as the request was, both Henry and Archbishop Wolsey appear to have been confident of its success. But the Pope was virtually the prisoner of the Emperor Charles (Catherine's

nephew), and dare not offend him. Hence, after much temporizing and delay, he finally acceded to Catherine's appeal to hear and decide her cause in his own court.

Incensed at this failure of his plans, Henry wreaked his vengeance first on Wolsey, who was condemned under the Statute of *Præmunire* for acting as Papal legate, although that position had actually been bestowed upon him at the King's special request. Next, the clergy were similarly made to suffer, and were heavily fined for having acknowledged Wolsey's legatine authority.

This, however, was but the beginning of the struggle. Other developments quickly followed. Parliament, at the King's instigation, forbade the payment to 1532 the Pope of "Annates" or first-fruits—the year's revenue which each bishop had been called upon to pay to Rome on his election to a see—and further provided that the Pope's sanction should not be essential to the validity of either the celebration of the sacraments or the consecration of a bishop. Nevertheless, Parliament specifically asserted that they were "as obedient, devout, catholic, and humble children of God as any people be within any realm christened." Almost simultaneously Convocation was compelled to accept the propositions known as the Submission of the Clergy, by which Henry secured full control of all ecclesiastical legislation.

Thus the way was cleared for the next stage in the conflict. Convocation declared Henry's marriage with Catherine null and void; Henry privately married Anne Boleyn; Parliament passed an Act forbidding all appeals to Rome concerning wills and property and the laws of marriage. Thus haughtily defied, the Pope, on his part pronounced the marriage with Anne Boleyn null and void, and called upon the

King to take back his first wife. Henry promptly replied by legislation forbidding (1) any archbishop or bishop to procure from the Pope any bulls, palls, or briefs, and (2) any payment for dispensations or licenses, thus overthrowing the whole system of Papal indulgences built up during the Middle Ages.

Further, Convocation declared that the Bishop of Rome had not by Scripture any greater authority in England than any other foreign bishop; and Parliament, in the Supremacy Act, affirmed that the King should be accepted as the "only supreme head of the Church."

When, next year, the Pope (Paul III) prepared a Bull excommunicating Henry, the latter secured from Parliament an Act for extirpating the authority 1535-6 of the Bishop of Rome.

Thus the breach with Rome was complete. But two facts stand out in the record. (1) Henry could not have carried his Legislature and his people with him in the quarrel—ignoble as his personal aims undoubtedly were—if the nation had not been ready, probably indeed, eager, to assist in ending the political interference in English affairs by the Papacy. The desire for national independence was the King's great strength. (2) Parliament was throughout resolved not to expose itself to the charge of having set up a new Church. Nothing was done which was meant to be disloyal to the principles of the Catholic Faith. "The jurisdiction of Rome was abjured, but not the belief."

Henry has, indeed, sometimes been depicted as an enthusiastic Protestant reformer, the founder of the English Church as we know it to-day. No statement could well be a greater travesty of the facts we have

¹ Parliament was careful to declare that this Act was not to be interpreted as intending to "decline or vary from the congregation of Christ's Church in anything concerning the very articles of the Catholic Faith."

just briefly related. Nay, more. Only two years later we find him forcing Parliament to pass the Act of Six Articles, which decreed the penalty of death to all who denied the doctrine of transubstantiation, and which also enforced belief in confession, private masses, communion in one kind, and the compulsory celibacy of the clergy. In a word, Henry, while absolutely repudiating Roman jurisdiction within his realm, consistently and with equal vehemence upheld Roman doctrine. Many heretics were tried and burned during his reign for holding Protestant opinions.

The King's ruthless suppression of the monasteries sprang from very different motives. No doubt monasticism had fallen from its original ideal. What 1536-40 the monks had gained in wealth they had more than lost in spiritual force, and the cry for reform was strong and not unwarranted. But Henry, for his part, saw in the wealth of the religious houses the means both of meeting his own great need for money and of binding the new nobility firmly to himself and his policy. He resolved accordingly upon their suppression, employing Thomas Cromwell, his vicar-general, as his chief instrument in carrying out his policy. The method adopted was utterly unconstitutional, the destruction of property wantonly barbarous. The process went on until every monastery and nunnery had been suppressed, its inmates turned adrift, its treasure confiscated, its buildings despoiled or ruined, its lands given to the King's nominees. Henry himself, it is calculated, received in this way not less than £38,000,000, according to the present value of money.

On the other hand, Henry sympathized both with the New Learning and with the desire for reform within the Church. We find him, accordingly authorizing the Great Bible (a revised edition of Tyndale's

and Coverdale's translations), and giving effect to his desire that the services of the Church should be in the English language. At his command the Litany was translated into English and published, and the germ of the national Prayer Book of a later date was thus created.

B.—The Protestant Ascendancy and the Marian Persecutions, 1547-1558.

Simultaneously with the outbreak of Henry VIII's quarrel with the Pope, the Reformation movement on the Continent began to influence English life and thought. The continental reformers denied the Papal claims; they challenged many of the fundamental doctrines of the Church as to its Sacraments and its ministers; they ignored the voice of authority, and appealed to the Bible as the sole rule and guide of faith; they regarded the Church simply as a department of the State.

To some extent the soil in England had been prepared for such seed as this. The effect of Wycliffe's teaching had not wholly passed away, although Lollardism had practically died out as a separate sect. The New Learning had kindled intellectual activity and prompted bolder speculative reasoning. The invention of printing enabled Lutheran tracts and Tyndale's translation of the Bible to be scattered widecast, although clandestinely, and so facilitated the dissemination of the new doctrines.

To this teaching Henry, as we have seen, was determinedly opposed, and he used his despotic power freely to crush out heresy. But on his death the conditions changed. The Regency Council, which governed the country during the minority of Edward VI, was composed almost exclusively of unscrupulous nobles who espoused the Protestant cause primarily for their own personal ends. In Church matters they found a docile

servant in Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, whose leaning was towards the German doctrines.

The policy pursued was in some respects drastic. Henry's heresy laws were, of course, repealed. A book of homilies was published, distinctly Protestant in tone. Injunctions were issued for the removal of pictures and images from the churches. But in liturgical matters more caution was at the outset shown. The task of drawing up an Order in English for the giving of the Communion in both kinds was entrusted to a fairly representative committee of bishops and clergy, the majority of whom were certainly not in sympathy with extreme Lutheranism or Calvinism.

To the same committee was immediately afterwards given the duty of preparing the first English Prayer Book. The compilers sought to simplify the services; to enable the congregations to join in them; to make them uniform throughout the country (hitherto there had been many differences of detail in different parts of the country); and to purify them of some admitted abuses and superstitions. The Prayer Book thus compiled bore no trace of primitive or contemporary heresy. It was in its essential features a translation and revision of the Breviary, Missal, and Pontifical according to the Sarum use, with some additions. It is doubtful whether the book ever received the sanction of Convocation, but its use was made compulsory on the clergy by the first Act of Uniformity in 1549.

Throughout the later years of the Protectorate the Church suffered more severely. Northumberland, as the head of the Council, allied himself closely with the Protestants to serve his own ends. The chantries and guilds were plundered, and half the lands of many a see flung to the spoilers to satisfy

their demands. Bishop Ridley, as Bishop of London, ordered in his diocese the removal of all altars and the use in their place of movable wooden tables, and the Council followed suit by issuing a similar order for the rest of the country. Chiefly on Cranmer's initiative a revision of the Prayer Book of 1549 was begun in 1552, and the use of this revised book—the second Prayer Book of Edward VI—was enforced by the second Act of Uniformity.

The changes made were numerous and considerable. They mark the extreme point to which the Church of England ever travelled in compromise with those who held Zwinglian or Calvinistic views. But this second Prayer Book never had any claim to ecclesiastical authority. It was only in force some eight months, and "probably was never used at all in many parts of England."

Rapid and sweeping as were the changes thus witnessed during Edward's inglorious reign, they were completely eclipsed by the course of events under Mary. Daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Arragon, Mary was at heart a Spaniard, to whom her father's breach with the Papacy had seemed a deadly sin. Hence, immediately after her coronation, all the statutes regarding religion passed in the previous reign and the anti-Papal legislation of Henry VIII were repealed, and the old heresy laws re-enacted. Finally, to complete the nation's submission to Rome, Cardinal Pole, the Papal legate, was officially welcomed by Parliament, which, on the nation's behalf, received formal "absolution" at his hands. Many hundreds of clergy, possibly one-fifth of all the beneficed clergy in the country, were deprived of their livings for having married.

After her marriage with Philip of Spain, the Queen, animated by a fierce bigotry only in part explained by

the misfortunes which dogged her life, insisted on the cruel enforcement of the heresy statutes against 1555-8 those who denied the doctrine of transubstantiation or refused to acknowledge the supremacy. For three years England was given up to religious persecution. In all some three hundred men and women suffered death at the stake. Most of them were poor and ignorant. But the martyrs included also five bishops, Cranmer (who nobly atoned at the stake for the characteristic weakness which had prompted one disavowal of his real belief), Hooper, Latimer, Ridley, and Ferrar.

The people sickened at the work of death, and sympathy was openly shown with the sufferers for conscience' sake. The effect produced, indeed, was exactly the reverse of that which Mary desired. The Marian persecution accomplished what the legislation of Henry and Edward had failed to achieve; it "made the mind of the people anti-Papal to the core."

C.—*The Elizabethan Settlement, 1558-1603.*

Rarely, if ever, had the national outlook seemed darker than when Elizabeth came to the throne. The country had been humiliated by defeat abroad, 1558 and "brought to the verge of rebellion by bloodshed and malgovernment at home." The whole machinery of public religion had been thrown out of gear. Eleven of the twenty-seven bishoprics were vacant; most of the surviving bishops had submitted to the Pope, and were Romanist in their sympathies. Hundreds of parishes were without clergy; many churches were falling into ruins.

The majority of the clergy held moderate views midway between the Romanism of the bishops appointed by Mary and the Protestantism which had been in part sprung from the teaching of the Swiss and German reformers, and which had been fanned rather than

extinguished by the Marian persecution. The extreme Protestants who had sought safety in exile during the last reign, hastened back to their own country in the belief that their views would now prevail.

In dealing with a situation so fraught with difficulty and danger Elizabeth's first and chief aims were to preserve her throne and to restore order. The Act of Supremacy (1559) emphatically repudiated the Papal claims and asserted the national independence, although in it the term "Supreme Head of the Church," adopted by Henry, was discarded for the title of "Supreme Governor." Parker, in whose fidelity and judgement the Queen could absolutely trust, was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, and strenuous efforts were at once made to meet the needs of the Church. The revision of the **Prayer Book** was undertaken by a committee under his presidency, with a view to effecting a compromise between the first and second Prayer Books of Edward VI. The attempt on the whole was distinctly successful. The revision, though attacked by extremists on both sides, was generally accepted, and its use as the only legal service book was enforced by the Act of Uniformity.¹

Parker consecrated eleven bishops to the vacant sees, held large ordinations, provided lay readers to help the clergy, and compiled a book of homilies. He took the lead in revising Cranmer's Articles of Religion, which were reduced to thirty-eight (afterwards thirty-nine) when issued in 1563. He, however, found himself faced by a development of Puritanism—e.g., its Calvinistic views on predestination and its attacks on the episcopacy—which in its extreme forms struck at the very roots of the doctrine and government of the

¹ Convocation was not consulted, and the sanction which the Elizabethan compromise may rightly claim to have from the Church is not that of formal acceptance, but of subsequent acquiescence. (Wake-man.)

Church. And his endeavour to secure the minimum degree of conformity to the rules of the Church in such matters as the reverent administration of the Sacraments aroused much opposition.

Moreover, the growth of Puritanism was stimulated by the steadily accumulating proofs of Rome's renewed efforts to bring England under its power, culminating in the excommunication of Elizabeth and the issue of the Pope's command to her subjects to renounce their allegiance to her. Romish plots against the Queen's person and her throne afforded excuse for severe statutes against Roman Catholics. But in ecclesiastical matters Elizabeth firmly adhered to her policy. She would not consent to the introduction of Presbyterianism into the Church. She was determined to enforce the use of the Prayer Book by ministers of the Church, and, among other measures, Whitgift (appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1583) insisted, with the Queen's hearty support, that every ordained minister should publicly accept the Prayer Book, the Articles, and the Royal Supremacy.

With the defeat of the Spanish Armada the tide turned. When the fear of invasion died away, Puritanism found public opinion less favourable to its 1588-93 claims. The Martin Marprelate tracts, in their scurrilous attacks on the Church and the bishops, further injured the Puritan movement.¹

One result was still severer measures for its suppression. Thus an Act was passed banishing persons who held unauthorized religious meetings or refused to attend church. Some of the more advanced "Nonconformists" who conscientiously objected to the Church's system and doctrines left the country and settled in Holland. Known as "Brownists," and later on as Independents,

¹ Whitgift was described in them as Beelzebub and a monstrous Antichrist, and the clergy as hogs, dogs, and desperate atheists.

they were the forerunners and ancestors of the Nonconformists of to-day.

To some of the contentions of the Puritan cause a complete and memorable reply was forthcoming as the Queen's reign drew to a close in Richard Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*. Its publication proved one of the landmarks in the history of English theology and of the English Church.

V

THE PURITAN TRIUMPH, 1603-1660

James I and the Puritans—Laud and Charles I—The attack on the Church—Evil Days.

ELIZABETH'S death was followed by an attempt to secure a material modification of her policy in religious matters. James I was at once asked 1603-4 by a large body of the Puritan clergy to redress their grievances by giving effect to their views in the teaching and services of the Church.

A Conference at Hampton Court was accordingly convened by the King at which these demands were formulated. They included requests that the clergy should not be required to subscribe to the Prayer Book, that the terms 'priest' and 'absolution,' and the Office for Confirmation should be omitted from the Church Services, and that the use of the ring in marriage and the sign of the Cross in Baptism should be discontinued. Such demands were, of course, overruled as impracticable; but some slight changes were made in the Prayer Book, including an addition to the Catechism dealing with the Sacraments.

1611 All parties at the Conference admitted the need for a new translation of the Bible. The King ordered the work to be undertaken by forty-seven

scholars of both Universities, and the result was the **Authorized Version**, which for nearly three centuries has held undisputed sway wherever the English language was spoken.

The reaction against the extreme forms of Calvinism and Puritanism which marked the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century 1615-25 was strengthened by the teaching of a notable group of scholars and divines.¹ Their influence, however, completely submerged for a time by the tumultuous changes which the next twenty-five years were to witness. In the sweeping although temporary triumph of extreme Puritanism which ensued, the most potent forces at work were primarily political in character.

Charles I, on succeeding to the throne, made **Laud** (then Bishop of S. Davids) his chief adviser in all ecclesiastical matters. Laud set to work to prevent the English Church from "being bound in the fetters of an iron system of compulsory and Calvinistic belief."² As Bishop of London (1628-33), and as Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633, he adopted stringent measures to enforce order and discipline in the Church. Offenders were tried and severely punished by the Court of High Commission. In any case protest against such proceedings would have been inevitable. But the hostility aroused was intensified by and linked with the growing revolt against the King's absolutism, with which Laud from the first unhappily identified himself. "Ecclesiastical discipline was interpreted by Englishmen in the light of the royal tyranny. Both stood together and both fell together."

¹ Among them, after Hooker, Bishop Lancelot **Andrewes** was the most conspicuous and attractive figure. Combining a fervent belief in definite Church principles with a generous tolerance of other views, Andrewes wielded a great and ennobling influence as preacher, scholar, and bishop.

² Gladstone.

So, when in 1640 Charles found himself, after an interval of eleven years, forced to summon Parliament, the Puritan majority at once attacked the 1640-5 Church. The clergy who had obeyed Laud's orders were punished. The High Commission was abolished; twelve bishops were imprisoned for protesting against the validity of certain Acts of Parliament; and ultimately the bishops were formally excluded from the House of Lords.

Meanwhile the constitutional struggle with the King developed into civil war. In return for military assistance from Scotland, the Solemn League and Covenant was accepted by the Parliament, and episcopacy was abolished. The work of "reforming" the Church was entrusted to the Westminster Assembly, consisting of English Puritans and Scotch Presbyterians. As the result of the Assembly's work, Parliament in 1645 abolished the use of the Prayer Book, and ordered the use of a new book of public worship called the **Directory**. Finally Laud was condemned by the act of the Legislature (not by judicial sentence) and executed in 1645, and Parliament established Presbyterianism in England.

After the execution of Charles I, Presbyterian Puritanism and Independent Puritanism were in conflict in the first years of the Commonwealth, but the latter ultimately gained the upper hand. Cromwell became Lord Protector (1653), and under the terms of the Covenant which established his protectorate, "popery" and "prelacy" were specifically excluded from the toleration otherwise extended to religious beliefs.

Commissioners were appointed to approve public preachers and examine nominees to benefices in order to exclude all who had been ordained by bishops, and most of the Church clergy who had succeeded in retaining their benefices were dispossessed. The use of the Prayer Book, even privately, was made punishable by

banishment. To be married in church, or to observe Christmas, save as a fast, became a crime. In all, the Puritan persecution drove some seven thousand of the clergy from their homes to wander with their wives in a state of destitution—not a few were starved to death.

VI

AFTER THE RESTORATION, 1660-1820

Prayer Book Revision—The outcome of the Reformation struggle—James II and the Seven Bishops—The Non-Jurors—Decay of Church Life—The Evangelicals.

THE tyrannical despotism of the Puritan regime was short-lived, and Charles II was welcomed back to his country and his throne with heartfelt and universal rejoicings. The various ordinances by which the Church had been superseded or persecuted were promptly revoked as the unconstitutional acts of a rebel authority. The Church simply returned to what was rightfully hers, and the parish clergy who had been ejected from their benefices were restored to them by the Convention Parliament.

A Conference was, however, held at the Savoy, by the King's orders, to discuss the possible revision of the Prayer Book. Both the bishops and the 1661-2 Puritans were represented, but, as at Hampton Court in 1604, the latter's demands for changes were utterly inconsistent with the teaching and faith of the Church, and the Conference proved futile. The work of revision was then undertaken by Convocation. A large number of alterations were made. Many of these, however, were verbal; the services as a whole were not remodelled; the scheme of worship hitherto in force was practically unchanged; in spirit and tone the Prayer Book of 1662 was almost identical

with the Prayer Book of 1559. In other words, the Elizabethan settlement had stood the test of time, and was henceforth to be the dominating factor in the services and formularies of the Church.

The amended Prayer Book was approved by Parliament and annexed by it to the Act of Uniformity. This Act enforced the use of the Revised Prayer Book (and no other) in all churches, and obliged all ministers to repudiate the Covenant and declare it unlawful to take up arms against the King. Some two thousand ministers refused these terms, resigned their benefices, and formed themselves into organized bodies of Protestant Nonconformists, building and endowing chapels for the purposes of their own worship.

Here, indeed, we reach the last act of the Reformation movement. On the one hand the Church had been reformed on Catholic lines, in accordance with the standard of Scripture and primitive antiquity. On the other hand it had deliberately rejected the extreme Puritanism which had so persistently struggled for ascendancy. Those who dissented from the definite and final decision thus arrived at, of necessity sought to apply their principles to voluntary organizations. But, owing to various causes, full political toleration of this non-conformity was withheld for years, and only secured after prolonged and bitter controversy.

Thus Parliament, in its dread of a return to military rule or the re-establishment of Roman Catholicism, enacted severe repressive statutes. The Conventicle Act made illegal all assemblies for religious worship not according to the

¹ "There is no point at which it can be said, Here the old Church ends, here the new begins. . . . The retention of the episcopate by the English Reformers at once helped to preserve this continuity and marked it in the distinctest way. . . . Warham, Crammer, Pole, Parker, there is no break in the line, though the first and third are claimed as Catholic, and the second and fourth as Protestant."—Beard's Hibbert Lectures.

Prayer Book; the Five Mile Act required all dissenting ministers to take an oath not to attempt to bring about any alteration in the Church and State; failing this, they were not to approach within five miles of any borough where they had preached.

Charles, anxious for toleration both for Roman Catholics and Puritans, sought, by royal declaration, to suspend the penalties attaching to Nonconformity. But this declaration was declared illegal, and Parliament replied by passing the **Test Act**, to compel all holders of office under the Crown to receive the Holy Communion according to the usage of the Church, and to declare their disbelief in transubstantiation.

This Act in its turn was suppressed by James II, who was bent on re-establishing Roman Catholicism, and who issued a **Declaration of Indulgence** suspending the penal acts against all Nonconformists. When the bishops were ordered to cause this Declaration to be read in all the churches, they declined to do so on the ground that the dispensing power claimed by the King had twice been declared illegal. Seven of the bishops presented a petition to this effect to the King, and were in consequence committed to the Tower and tried for publishing a seditious libel. Their acquittal was welcomed by the nation with enthusiastic joy.

No event could have shown more plainly than this how alien was the King's rule to the deepest feelings of the English people. The trial of the **Seven Bishops** was, in fact, almost immediately followed by the landing of William of Orange at Torbay and the flight of James.

But although the Revolution itself was the act, not of any party or section, but of the nation as a whole, the bestowal of the crown on William was by no

means unanimously acquiesced in by Churchmen.

Archbishop Saneroff, several bishops, and a large 1689 number of the higher clergy and prominent laymen—known as "**Non-jurors**"—refused to take the oath of allegiance to the new sovereign, on the ground that they had not been dispensed by James from the similar oath they had previously taken to him. They suffered the full penalty for their scrupulousness; when the oaths were tendered and refused they were expelled from office. The loss involved was great. Party politics permeated and weakened Church life, as Broad Churchmen more or less inevitably sided with the Whigs, and High Churchmen believed that their faith was bound up with the fortunes of the Tories.

Meanwhile the Revolution brought with it distinct steps towards religious toleration. The **Toleration**

Act practically established freedom of worship, although it left untouched the civil disabilities imposed on Nonconformists, and although, too, Roman Catholics, Unitarians, and Jews were excluded from its benefits. Simultaneously, a growing conception of the duties and responsibilities of the Church was shown in the founding of the **Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge** and the **Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts**. In many respects, indeed, the reign of Queen Anne witnessed exceptionally vigorous Church life. Free schools were provided in many parts of the country; the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy was formed for the relief of clerical poverty; legislation provided for the building of fifty new churches; and the fund known as **Queen Anne's Bounty** was founded.¹

¹ With the consent of Parliament the firstfruits annexed by Henry VIII to the crown (see p. 26) were definitely appropriated to increase the incomes of small benefices.

But with the accession of George I. a change for the worse was quickly apparent. In part this was undeniably due to politics. The Church in large measure became the tool and plaything of party spirit. The futile impeachment and virtual acquittal of Dr. Sacheverell for seditious language in 1710 marked a triumph for Toryism which was quickly followed by the violent swinging of the pendulum in the opposite direction. From 1714-60 the Whigs were in power, and under them Latitudinarianism ruled.¹ It would, of course, be grossly unjust to deny the service rendered to religion on its intellectual side by divines like Bishops Burnet, Tillotson, and Butler. In combating intellectual opponents of Christianity they met effectively and invaluable one of the needs of the time. But the practical energy of the Church declined. Its evangelistic zeal seemed to die out until the spiritual lethargy thus brought about ultimately gave way to an evangelistic revival in which the outstanding figures are those of Wesley and his supporters.

The son of a Lincolnshire clergyman, John Wesley received Holy Orders in 1725, and afterwards accepted the headship of a society started by his brother Charles and other students at Oxford for the improvement of their spiritual lives. By their strict and regular observance of the rules of the Church they gained the nickname of "Methodists." On returning from a missionary journey to Georgia, the two Wesleys, with George Whitefield, began to traverse the country to preach the Gospel to the masses. The churches were open to them until hostility and

¹ The Government prorogued Convocation in 1717, and refused to allow it to meet again for the dispatch of business. The suspension remained in force till 1832, and throughout this period the Church was thus deprived of all constitutional means of collectively taking counsel or effecting reform.

suspicion were aroused by their methods. The eloquence and earnestness of the preachers, however, sufficed to attract vast audiences in the open air, and remarkable results followed from their impassioned appeals. Whitefield's preaching, indeed, was such as England had never heard before, whilst John Wesley's great powers of leadership drew round him a large and growing body of helpers and co-workers among whom a definite organization was gradually developed.

From first to last Wesley himself elung closely to the Church, and urged upon his followers the duty of remaining within its ranks. But before long a breach was manifestly inevitable, and, four years after his death, separation was definitely effected when Wesleyan ministers were authorized to administer the Lord's Supper.

Methodism itself, however, was in one sense the least result of the Wesleyan movement, for the latter effectively dispelled the apathy and lethargy which had crept over the Church.

One outcome of the revival which ensued was the founding of the Church Missionary Society, to promote the evangelization of Africa and the East, and of the Religious Tract Society, to provide and distribute religious tracts among the people. Five years later the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed, and with the abolition of the Slave Trade the names of Wilberforce and other evangelical Churchmen are inseparably linked, to their undying honour.

Here, too, it should be noted that by the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts (1828) Nonconformists were enabled to enter Parliament and hold any public office, and that the penal laws against Roman Catholics, which had sprung from the fear of recurrence of foreign despotism, at last gave place to the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1832.

VII

THE REVIVAL OF CHURCH LIFE, 1830-1900

The Oxford Movement—Tracts for the Times—Official Condemnation—Newman's Secession—Some fruits of the Revival.

INTENSE and absolutely sincere as was the piety of the Evangelical Churchmen, it left the English Church for the most part untouched. In the early years of the nineteenth century, indeed, the Church, as a living Church in the sense that Churchmen of to-day know the term, seemed non-existent. Only here and there was the Catholic Faith taught in its fullness; torpor, indifference, nay, neglect of first duties, marked Church work and administration, both diocesan and parochial.

The "Oxford Movement" was to be the human instrument for making these dry bones live. The ground was prepared for it by the publication 1830-40 of John Keble's *Christian Year* (1827). But the Movement itself dates from the Assize Sermon which Keble preached at Oxford in June, 1833, on "National Apostasy," and which was prompted by a proposal before Parliament for the suppression of ten Irish bishoprics. It was followed in September by the first of the "Tracts for the Times."

The "tracts" were short papers which dealt with some definite question of Church doctrine or practice, in order to recall and emphasize the sacramental truths and teaching that had been permitted to fall into the background. At the outset Keble, R. H. Froude, and Newman were the chief workers in this cause, but gradually Newman stood out more and more prominently as its leader. By the end of 1834 thirty-six

tracts had been published; and in Oxford itself their influence was reinforced by Newman's famous sermons in S. Mary's Church. In 1835 Pusey became fully associated with the Movement, which for the next five years continued to make "steady and at times triumphal progress."

The publication of Tract 90 was the occasion rather than the cause of the outbreak of a great storm of hostility. Newman, in this tract, put no new 1841-5 meaning on the Thirty-nine Articles; he merely sought to define and emphasize the meaning which they naturally and legitimately conveyed. His opponents, however, contended that his teaching was evidence of a conspiracy to undermine the English Church and reassert the supremacy of Rome. The heads of colleges at Oxford, led away by the current of feeling at the time, formally condemned it. Newman bowed before the storm, and the issue of the tracts ceased.

Two years later Pusey was similarly condemned for preaching a sermon on the Eucharist, which in reality consisted chiefly of quotations from the writings of the Fathers and of Anglican divines. In 1845 Ward's work, *The Ideal of a Christian Church*, was condemned by Oxford Convocation, and its author deprived of his University degree. When Convocation was also asked to pass a decree condemning Tract 90, the Proctors for the year, Guillemard and Church (afterwards Dean of S. Paul's), used their right to veto the proposal.

Newman, having previously removed his name from the books of his college (Oriel) and of the University, was received into the Romish Church on October 8th of the same year.

Here our "outline" of the history of the English Church must pause. Space does not permit any attempt

to chronicle the stages of the remarkable revival which followed from the Oxford Movement. But something of the meaning, character, and range of this revival may be indicated by two brief quotations :—

"There was from the commencement a section of the Oxford Movement which tended towards Rome, and the secession of this section by degrees to its proper home advanced, in my opinion, rather than retarded the progress of the movement; it was like lightening the ship of ballast which only hinders its advance. John and Thomas Kehle, E. B. Pusey, Charles Marriott, R. Church, Isaac Williams, F. Rogers, J. M. Neale, in short, the many able men who remained, far more than counterbalanced the weight of those who had gone; and so, in spite of the most violent opposition, the party made rapid progress, and became in time the strongest element in the Church of England. Moreover, a number of practical workers came to the front, who did not identify themselves with the movement, and on some points were decidedly opposed to it, but who spread the same principles, in the main, which it inculcated, far and wide throughout the country. Samuel Wilberforce, among the bishops, and Walter Farguhar Hook, among the parish priests, were by far the most prominent and effective of these; they raised respectively the standard of episcopal and parochial work. Others followed in their wake, till the Church became far more of a living reality than it had been."¹

"Signs of the revival of Church life became everywhere visible. Churches were cleaned, services were multiplied and made bright with music. The Holy Eucharist was celebrated more frequently and with greater reverence. Communion became more frequent, and communicants more numerous. Devotional meetings for clergy were held. Greater attention was paid to preparation for Confirmation. Societies were formed for promoting the work of the Church at home and abroad. Fresh interest was visible in Foreign Missions. A real effort was made to cope with the spiritual destitution in large towns. New parishes were formed, new churches built and endowed."

"If the revival means anything at all, it means the complete restoration of the balance to the point which it had reached when foreign Protestantism began seriously to influence the English Reformation. It means the restoration of the Church of England to the position which it held when Edward VI came to the throne. It means the repudiation of the teaching and the systems of Zwingle, Luther, and Calvin, and the claim of legal, historical, and actual continuity with the primitive and the mediæval Church."²

¹ Overton.

² Wakeman.

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